



Transfor**M**ATIVE

# Data Directions: Pioneering Professional Pathways in Education

A TransforMATIVE Roundtable Networking Dinner

Sponsored by Configur 12.03.24, The Ivy, Temple Row, Birmingham

# Executive Summary

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape, the strategic use of data stands as a pivotal element for driving improvements in teaching, learning, and operational efficiency. This white paper explores three fundamental themes critical to enhancing data capability within the education sector: establishing professional standards for data professionals, drawing lessons from data management practices outside the education sector, and leveraging collaborations and partnerships. Through a detailed exploration of these themes, this document aims to provide actionable insights and strategies to foster a data-empowered educational ecosystem.



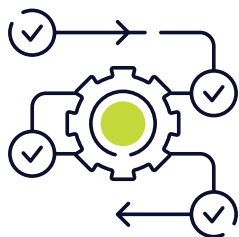
**Host:** Jonny Wathen / Lisa Hawker - TransforMATive

**Sponsor:** Configur

**Focus:** Data Directions: Pioneering Professional Pathways in Education



# Insights and Strategies



## Establishing Professional Standards and Frameworks

### The Need for Professional Standards

**The education sector recognises the growing importance of data in improving educational outcomes and operational practices. However, there is a noticeable gap in professional standards and frameworks specifically designed to support data professionals within this sector. Establishing such standards is essential for acknowledging the specialised skills required, enhancing the credibility of the profession, and providing clear career pathways for individuals in these roles.**

Delegates expressed a strong consensus on the need for clearer career pathways and professional development opportunities for data professionals within education. The discussion highlighted a significant gap in recognised qualifications and standards that could help define and elevate the role of data managers and analysts in schools and trusts.

A pilot project involving an apprenticeship framework for data professionals in education was discussed. This initiative aims to provide structured training and career progression for individuals responsible for data management within schools, emphasising the importance of aligning educational data roles with recognised professional standards similar to those in business and healthcare sectors.

One of the challenges discussed was the varying levels of data literacy among staff in educational institutions and the lack of a unified framework to address this issue across the sector. Participants shared experiences of developing internal training programs to improve data literacy but highlighted the need for sector-wide standards and accreditation to ensure consistency and quality.



## Learning from Outside the Education Sector

### Drawing Inspiration

**The private sector and other industries have long leveraged data management and innovation to drive strategic decisions and operational efficiencies. The education sector can draw valuable lessons from these practices, particularly in areas such as data governance, analytics, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).**

The conversation underscored the potential for learning from data management practices in other industries. Participants discussed how methodologies and technologies successfully implemented in the private sector could be adapted to meet the unique needs of education.

**Innovation in Action:** A case study was shared about a trust experimenting with AI and machine learning to automate aspects of assessment and reporting, reducing the workload on teachers and improving the accuracy of data analysis. This example sparked discussion on the practicalities and ethical considerations of applying such technologies in educational settings.

**Challenges and Considerations:** The discussion also touched on the critical need for data quality and integrity when leveraging advanced technologies like AI.

# Insights and Strategies

An insightful point was made about the importance of starting with clean, reliable data and clearly defined hypotheses before applying AI or machine learning solutions to ensure meaningful outcomes.



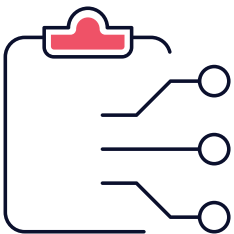
## Enhancing Capability through Collaboration

**Multi-academy trusts (MATs) possess unique opportunities to enhance their data capability through MAT to MAT collaborations and partnerships with EdTech ecosystem partners and the Department for Education (DfE).**

The potential of partnerships and collaborative efforts to address data challenges was a recurring theme. Discussions highlighted successful examples of trusts working together to share resources and expertise, as well as the potential for partnerships with tech companies to access advanced data management tools and platforms.

**Collaborative Partnerships:** An innovative collaboration between several trusts was highlighted, where they pooled resources to develop a shared data analytics platform. This initiative allowed smaller trusts with limited resources to benefit from advanced data analysis capabilities, improving decision-making and student outcomes across the collaborative group.

**Outsourcing vs. In-house Development:** The debate on what aspects of data management should be kept in-house versus outsourced to specialised providers was lively. The consensus was that while core competencies and strategic data use should be developed internally, there is significant value in leveraging external expertise for technical solutions, infrastructure, and training. The key was finding the right balance to maximise resources without compromising the organisation's control over its data strategy.



## Conclusion

**The path to a data-empowered educational ecosystem lies in establishing robust professional standards, learning from innovation outside the sector, and fostering strategic collaborations. By addressing these themes collectively, the education sector can unlock the full potential of data to enhance teaching, learning, and operational efficiency, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for all students.**

Participants left the meeting with actionable insights and a sense of optimism about the future of data management in education. The discussions underscored the complexity of the challenges but also highlighted the sector's commitment to leveraging data more effectively to enhance educational outcomes. The examples and strategies shared during the meeting provided a rich foundation for future initiatives and collaborations aimed at elevating the role of data in education.